



The HPD News

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March 2001

Welcome to the First Edition of the 'New' HPD News!

This is a monthly newsletter for ALL Houston Police Department employees. It will highlight accomplishments by HPD employees both 'on the job' and away from the office. It will also focus on programs and events that HPD employees can participate in and attend. This will be YOUR newsletter to share information with your co-workers about things that are happening in your division or office or in your life.

Let us know what you would like to read about in the HPD News. If you have a story idea or information that you think your co-workers would be interested in reading, call the Media Relations Office at 713-308-1800 and ask to speak to a public information officer. We look forward to working with you and making this a fun and informative newsletter for all HPD employees.

Awards Ceremony Recognizes Officers and Civilians



Chief C.O. Bradford (c.) presents Life Saving Awards to Officer Julie Beckworth (l.) and Officer Andrew Taravella (r.)

HPD honored 99 police officers, seven civilian employees, eight Houston Fire Department employees, nine officers from other law enforcement agencies and six citizens at an awards ceremony on Wednesday, January 17, 2001.

Chief C.O. Bradford presented three Meritorious Service Awards, five Life Saving Awards, one Blue Heart Award, thirteen Chief of Police Commendations, two Unit Citations and four Public Service Awards. Two of the Life Saving Awards were presented to officers involved in incidents that received extensive local media coverage. In one of the inci-

dents, a man threatened the life of his infant son by dangling him from a bridge over the Eastex Freeway. Officers calmly spoke to the man in his native language and were successful in getting him to hand over his son to authorities and then peacefully surrender. The other incident took place during the holiday season when a woman threatened to commit suicide by jumping from a Christmas street ornament in the Galleria area. She was saved by HPD officers and Houston Fire Department personnel.

The next awards ceremony will be held in the spring. All HPD employees are encouraged to attend.

Chief's Column

Countless stories and articles have either been written or told about police officers and their profession. However, the one that seems most elusive is the one that reminds us of our code of ethics and the sworn promises in taking the oath of office. In bringing forth this topic, I ask each and every one of you, regardless of tenure, to take time and reflect on the process by which we came to this profession. In doing so, re-examine the ideas, the goals, the aspirations, and even the hardships we experienced in order to achieve this most honored and cherished profession. A position that is sought by many, though few are chosen; a position for which the public entrusts their faith and belief. I hope you will not be afraid to dig deep and search for

those thoughts, feelings, or emotions we have all undoubtedly experienced ... of wanting to be a part of the solution, however big or small it may be ... as we truly are a part of, not apart from. Can you remember the process you went through to get here? For many of you, I wager it was the proverbial "childhood dream"; but in any event, the dream and pursuit of this idea eventually became apparent. You decided you really wanted to help people, because people do in fact count; and generally, it is the policeman people call when they most need help. I know over the years there have been a multitude of emotions experienced; elation and stress, pride and despair, happiness and anger, to mention only a few. So as I close, the only thing I ask is that each and every one of you strive daily to do your

part; with the zest and enthusiasm you held as you began your career. To achieve your personal professional potential which holds personal integrity and professional attributes necessary to succeed in any position. I challenge you to rise to ever-greater heights of achievement; for not everyone can be the leader of a group, but everyone can lead.

So go the extra step and do what we came here to do ... To be the type of Peace Officer that children wish they could be ... and veterans in reflection wish they had been.

C. O. Bradford
Chief of Police



HPD Implements Amber Alert to Find Abducted or Lost Children

The Houston Regional Amber Plan (HRAP) is designed to help find missing children believed to be abducted. The program is a cooperative public service effort between local law enforcement, news media outlets, Amber Plan business partners and the public. Under the plan, parents of missing or abducted children should immediately contact their local law enforcement agency to file a Missing Person report. There is NO 24-hour waiting period. The agency will immediately enter the information into the Texas Missing Person's Clearinghouse and the National Crime Information Center's Missing Person file.

In order to activate the HRAP, four criteria must be met:

- The missing child must be 17 years of age or younger and the law enforcement agency investigating believes the child has been abducted (unwillingly taken from their environment without permission from the child's parents or legal guardian).
- The agency believes the missing child is in danger of serious bodily harm or death
- An investigation has taken place that verified the abduction or eliminated alternative explanations
- Sufficient information is available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the child, suspect and/or the suspect's vehicle

The Houston Regional Amber Alert message, which is broadcast on participating radio and television stations, encourages the public to look for the missing child or suspect, but to take no action themselves. Instead, they should immediately call the law enforcement agency phone number included in the alert.

HPD Helicopter Division Acquires Two New Ships

HPD has two new helicopters with technology that will help locate suspects and missing persons much easier and faster. The two new aircraft, Schweizer 333's, were purchased in December, 2000, at a cost of just over a million dollars each.

The aircraft are equipped with the latest technology including a thermal imager and color video camera; a 15 million candle-power spotlight; an onboard computer with moving map program and a communications suite capable of communicating with HPD and other law enforcement agencies.

The onboard computer will save officers time. "Instead of officers manually looking up a location in a Key Map, they'll type a location into the computer," said Lt. John King, Helicopter Patrol. "The com-



puter then paints a map and directs the officers where to go and how long it will take to get there."

The FLIR (Forward Looking Infra-Red) camera works together with the helicopter's 15 million candle-power spotlight.

"If the officer uses the FLIR

to search a field and finds a missing child or suspect, he can illuminate what it's looking at," said Lt. King. "Wherever the FLIR moves, the spotlight moves."

The Helicopter Patrol has eight helicopters and is staffed by 46 officers and 15 civilians.

HPD Wellness Center

Have you visited HPD's Wellness Center on the 22nd floor of 1200 Travis? The center is more than just a well-equipped weight room. Aerobics classes are held regularly. If you prefer to take a brisk walk or a run, you can do either or both activities three mornings a week.

Want to check your blood pressure or cholesterol? How about starting a fitness regimen designed specifically for your needs? The Center has two certified personal trainers who will work with you and monitor your progress.

For more information, contact Officers Mark Caronna or Michelle Losey at 713-308-1298.

Gunners Take Aim At 2001 Season

The Houston Gunners are ready to kick-off the 2001 Law Enforcement Football League season. The regular season begins Saturday, March 17 when the Gunners tackle their rivals, the Harris County Sheriff's Department Cavalry, at Alief Crump Stadium on Cook Road at Alief-Clodine Road. Kick-off is at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$5.

This is the seventh season for the former 1999 National Public Safety Football League Champions. New head coach Sgt. Robert Bell (Office of the Inspector General) is looking for positive things from the team. Last year the Gunners narrowly missed the playoffs. On another note, the city of Houston will host the National Public Safety Football League championship game for 2001 on Saturday, April 7, 2001, when the Gunners play the Dallas/Ft. Worth Police Department Panthers.

Meet Your Public Information Officers

These are your Houston Police Public Information Officers. PIOs are responsible for contributing stories to the all-new HPD News, responding to requests for information from the news media and the public, and representing the department at various crime scenes and events.



Alvin Wright joined HPD as a public information officer in August, 1992. Prior to that, he worked for five years as a news producer at Channel 2 (KPRC-TV) and in the production department at Channel 26 (KRIV-TV) and Channel 20 (KTXH-TV). He also freelanced for CBS Sports and ESPN.



John Cannon joined HPD as a public information officer in January, 1996, after covering HPD for four years as a reporter for KTRH-AM (NewsRadio 740). He and his wife, Marisa, are expecting their first child, a boy, in April.



Sandra Aponte is a former reporter for Channel 48 (KTMD-TV, Telemundo) in Houston. She has eight years experience in television and print media and is bilingual (English/Spanish). She looks forward to helping HPD further enhance its relationship with the Hispanic community.



Kam-Sing (James) Yip was born and raised in Hong Kong and has lived in Houston for six years. While in Hong Kong, he worked for the Consulate General as an editor and translator. His language skills include Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese.



Martin DeLeon worked for six years at Channel 26 (KRIV-TV) before joining HPD in October, 2000. He collects Beatles' memorabilia as a hobby and his collection spans 25 years. He is married and lives in the FM 1960 area.